

A LETTER

IN

REFUTATION OF THE ASPERSIONS

CAST UPON

THE COURT OF ASSISTANTS

AND

INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS

OF THE

ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS

BY

A PHYSICIAN, IN A LATE ADDRESS.



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A
L E T T E R,

&c. &c.

To the Members of the Royal College of Surgeons.

GENTLEMEN,

ONE of your own body addresses you, to repel a most flagrant attack on the respectability of the profession,—“An Address to the Members of the Royal College of Surgeons of London, on the *injurious Conduct and defective State* of that Corporation to Professional Rights, Medical Science, and the Public Health.”

This letter, by Dr. Armstrong, affects to be a complaint against the College of Surgeons; but I shall have no difficulty in refuting it, and also of showing that it is an injury to the profession at large, and that it has proceeded from a narrow and interested view of the subject. I would say, that the author proceeds on an erroneous principle, but I fear there is more than this; that he is perversely and willingly in ignorance of what

the College of Surgeons has done, of late, to improve the department of surgery.

But such is the license that this gentleman has taken with the characters of men who are deservedly at the head of their profession, that he boldly accuses the members of the Court of "corporate oppression, destructive to individuals;" of "injustice and cruelty;" "wordly duplicity;" of having done in concert "what they had not the courage to attempt individually in the broad light of day." He even goes so far, in taxing the members with duplicity, as to say, that they may be courteous in private, and in public may avow an anxiety for the general good, at the same time that "they are actually endeavouring to crush individuals best fitted to serve the community." Nay, he has assurance enough to contrast their conduct with his own; to assert his purity of motive, his total disinterestedness, his resignation of all comfort, to perform this duty of attacking the College.

He must be a weak man that would offer such assertions, when it is known that he is in close alliance with the very men whose cause he is advocating, and of whom he also says he is a "firm adherent."

"As a prelude to the exposure of some of the prominent offences of the College," he declares himself fully satisfied with himself: "I am, (says he,) fully satisfied of the purity of my motives."

But, on the contrary, I must affirm, that there

has not appeared, even in the present time, so prolific in slanderous and libellous attacks, against individuals of our profession, any thing equal to this in impudence and shameless perversion of the truth.

He does not confine his attack to the Court of Assistants, but impugns the conduct and talent of the established teachers of anatomy in London. "The old-established lectures on anatomy were conducted in some places with a carelessness which, little interesting to the feelings of youth, was more fitted to enable them to pass the forms of examination than to impress them deeply with the practical value of that most useful part of elementary education."

Nay, he has, in another part of his letter, spoken of the established lecturers being elected merely by interest, and even alludes to them as "unqualified pretenders," who should be discouraged. He even contrasts them with one of his protégés, and, in sounding the praises of this man, of whose name I venture to say the profession is entirely ignorant, but who, it would appear, is a person with whom Dr. Armstrong has some private compact, he says, "His lectures on surgery would have been highly desirable, as he would have *associated* them with the principles of physic, too little understood by some long established lecturers on the former subject."

An honest and simple person would naturally

say, it must be some great and heinous offence, some crying and monstrous evil, that should tempt a respectable physician, one of a profession which rather affects reserve, to fall into such irregularities as this,—to attack a whole College,—to accuse them of ignorance and incapacity, “of utter incompetency,”—to accuse them of misrule from love of gain, and of exacting exorbitant fees for private distribution. That I may not be suspected of exaggeration, I give his own words: “exorbitant fees exacted, the private distribution of the immense funds,” the “monopolizing by-law,” &c.

It is natural to ask, what could have tempted Dr. Armstrong to do this? or what could have induced him to attack the characters of the teachers of anatomy and surgery, who are so generally respected? In endeavouring to solve this, I was advised to examine the pages of a weekly publication, where, in despite of truth, the most respectable establishments and the most meritorious members of the profession are abused. The contents of this work incontestibly prove, that Dr. Armstrong was, during the last year, one of its chief supporters. In the pages of that publication we find him aver, “that in this age a new sect of men has arisen in the profession. Among this sect I voluntarily place myself as a humble but a firm adherent.” He continues, that “he will, in the accumulated strength of this age,

grasp, and rend, and wrench away the forms, and fooleries, and mummeries, by which physic has been cumbered and obscured.”

In another part of the same work, we find him stating, with unparalleled effrontery, “ these principles, &c. have not yet found their way into some long-established colleges and schools, where pride and prejudice, and dullness and darkness, exult in the mockery of an old charter, which is despised by all pure and independent minds.”

Such ribald stuff, in the way of lectures to young and uneducated men, must incline the members of the profession to say, “ that the best grace of wit will shortly turn into silence, and discourse grow commendable in none but parrots.”

Such remarks, and such language, levelled, not at the College of Surgeons, but at another equally respected body, the College of Physicians, excited me to make further inquiries, and then I discovered why this doctor should talk of the “ mockery” of examinations. He was himself, it would appear, *rejected* when examined before the College of Physicians; and, although to every person acquainted with the gentleman on whom the duty of examining him devolved, there can be no necessity for showing that the examination was conducted in a fair and honourable manner; yet to those

who may suspect this, there is the proof of Dr. Armstrong having had the offer made of the examination being published, if he chose. I cannot, of course, vouch for the accuracy of the latter part of this statement, but such is the current report.

But in mentioning this circumstance, which every one will admit, after the late conduct of Dr. Armstrong, is, in justice to both Colleges, called for, I do not mean to infer that the temporary rejection of a candidate betokens any great incapacity ; but if, after such a check, a gentleman should do as Dr. Armstrong has done, and endeavour to vilify the College of which he was desirous of being a member, he does that which every man of sense, or who had self-respect, would avoid, as raising suspicion of the purity of his motives.

In making these remarks, which, I am ready to admit, are personal, I feel confident that I shall be acquitted of all blame by the better part of the profession.

If a man, who is in the daily habit of scoffing at the highest institutions and the most eminent characters in the country, is so buoyed up by the applauses of ignorant and badly educated young men, as to be induced to venture to address the profession on an important question, and to make that address the vehicle of abuse, it becomes a duty to inquire into that man's motives ;

and if, in that inquiry, disagreeable facts should be elicited, he has only himself to blame.

I confess that I have lost all respect for Dr. Armstrong; that I look upon him as a very HUNT in medicine; a busy, and mischievous, and avowed agitator: but, although his folly in the present instance forces me to be personal, a more important question than what regards him is at issue, and, therefore, I shall closely examine the matter he has agitated.

One of the pretended grounds of complaint against the College of Surgeons, conveyed by Dr. Armstrong in language the most offensive to good manners, is, that the members of the College have taken upon themselves the office of guardians over the education of the students. He complains that in the performance of this duty, which is certainly one of great importance to the public, as well as to our profession, they have passed a law, in which they declare that they will not receive as testimonies, in favour of a candidate for a diploma from their own body, the certificates of men who have not given proofs of their competency to teach.

If the College is to be blamed, it is for not having sooner enacted the present law; for how necessary it was for them to take upon themselves this duty of guardianship must be evident to every one who for a moment considers the present state of the profession. Nay, the

very advertisements which annually appear in the month of September, of "Lectures to be given as usual," but which are never completed; of "Attendance on Hospitals and Infirmaryes," which have no existence, are sufficient proofs of the necessity of the College, as the constituted head of the profession, being active to protect the interests of the unfriended student, who arrives in town ignorant of the tricks to which he may be exposed.

A young man has no suspicion that many of the alluring Tables of Contents, called *Prospectuses*, which he sees in the medical booksellers' shops, are deceptions, or, at most, merely noting the good designs of the writers, which are, however, seldom fulfilled.

When it is considered that there are individuals who are by no means solicitous to advise their apprentices and dependents to attend the lectures of the masters in their profession;—when it is recollected that the convenience of situation will too often influence them to send their young men to the most convenient place, without regard to its character;—and if they suppose that the youths entrusted to their charge will receive from a grinder such a knowledge of the common details of anatomy as will enable them to pass certain examinations, care little whether they ever have any opportunity of learning the principles of their profession;—I say, if

such practices prevail, is it not high time that there should be some public guardians of the pupil's interest? What does a father desire when, at a great expense, he sends his son to London? Does he intend, when he is making a sacrifice of the comforts of his family at home, in the fond hope that his son shall make a respectable figure in his profession, that, for the sake of a few pounds, that son shall lose the advantage of being taught by the men who, by the voice of their profession, and by the public at large, have been long esteemed the most eminent?

Will he be satisfied, on the return of his son, to find that although he has passed certain examinations, because he chose, or was advised by some friend in London, to save the twentieth, or even the fortieth part of his calculated expenses, he has merely learned a few facts by rote; that, for the purpose of passing his examination, his head has been crammed with an inconsequent jargon of names which he is in a hurry to forget; that he has received his education from one little older than himself, and who has not the talents to carry him into reputation, and has not had the opportunity of improvement; that his office is a grinder, or, at most, a demonstrator, without being capable of joining to these lessons any precept drawn from the practice of his profession?

The father finds, to his sorrow, that his son has been badly advised, and learns, too late, that he has had no opportunity of acquiring the principles of medicine and surgery, which he knows can only be taught by men of experience,—by those who have had, by their connexions with hospitals, the opportunity of combining the sciences of anatomy and surgery. Nay, the father may have even a more serious subject of regret, in reflecting that his son has probably not had, in the conduct of his teacher, the best example; that his teacher may have had no character to sustain. What, for instance, must be the feelings of a father when he reflects that this turbulent-minded physician, this avowed agitator and radical in his profession, is the example by which his son is to regulate his future life?

But let us consider the feelings which even naturally arise in the mind of an ingenuous young man who has been inveigled into the school of a grinder, either by the mis-representations of a false friend, or by a fellow-student; for, like the fox who lost his tail, the pupils of certain teachers are anxious to have companions, to show their degradation. Human creatures court the sympathy of each other in their disgrace as in their success; in their despair as well as in their hope; and it is so with

these young men, who feel themselves unpleasantly situated.

A student, on his first arrival, is generally as ignorant of the characters of professional men in this Babylon as he is of most other matters in it. When he has had time to look about him, and understand his relative place, he sees that there are schools where lectures are given by men of the highest rank in the profession, where there are splendid establishments, museums of natural and diseased structure, and where the demonstrators and assistants rank higher in the profession than the masters by whom he is taught.

He sees the utmost respect paid by the pupils to their teachers; but when he turns to look at the school of which he has become a member, he observes the turbulent and disrespectful behaviour of his fellow-students, and finds that his master's name is not respected in the profession.

When he considers that his teacher demands only half the fee that is taken in the other schools, does he not naturally infer that his master has not sufficient confidence in his own merits to put himself fairly in competition with other lecturers? In short, he finds himself a member of an inferior school, and that he is not on the same grade with other young men with whom

he considers himself on an equality from birth and education.

What are this man's feelings when he retires to the country?—Has he any pride in hearing of the advance of science by men he never saw, or of operations and improvements in practice by men who should have been his masters?

I have no hesitation in saying that the parents of young men, sent up to town to finish their education, have a demand on the College of Surgeons to provide for their intended candidates, and to watch over their interests by being attentive to the characters of their teachers. Nay, I will go further; if I had not seen the Court of Assistants anxious to do their duty, I should myself, long ago, have brought this subject before them with all a father's indignation.

It is lamentable to hear it asserted, that there are certain classes of students who can only be taught by men of a certain grade, and by truly childish modes; that there are pupils, either so little in the rank of gentlemen as to be unable to pay the difference, or the fee between the old and the new teachers, or of so mean a capacity that they can be taught only as school-boys are taught their catechism.

In mentioning new lecturers, I must in justice state, that the remarks do not apply to Mr.

Mayo : he has had the proper and gentlemanly feeling to demand the same fees from those who come to him as pupils as in the long-established schools : no doubt he is aware that success on any other terms is no success at all.

As the son of a gentleman, I should have expected no less from him ; and, in speaking of him, I shall, for once, follow the example of Dr. Armstrong, and ask, if the College act fairly by receiving the certificates of a grinder, who has lately set down near this young anatomist, and distinctly acknowledges his inferiority, by offering to teach at less than one-half his fee ?

But, although I have here alluded to the difference in the fees, it cannot for a moment be supposed, except by men of sordid minds, that gentlemen so highly respected as the members of the Court of Assistants can have looked at the fees of the new schools being one-half or two-thirds less than the old-established ones, in any other light than as a mark of conscious inferiority on the part of these teachers.

The College has, of late years, seen, with regret, that the class of teachers in anatomy has increased, and its respectability has proportionally diminished. The examiners found that certain persons who claimed the right of giving certificates of pupilage had not gone through

the system of education necessary to qualify them to become the heads of schools.

The members of the College know, that to teach requires experience and practical knowledge; but they found candidates for diplomas presenting themselves, who had been taught by grinders to repeat certain lessons in anatomy, learned by rote: they found these young men ignorant of the principles of the science.

Upon this they became convinced that, however strict they might make their examinations, they would not fulfil the duty entrusted to them, if they were not guardians of the education of the students of anatomy; and this it was that induced them to pass the late by-law, which, however, it is to be observed, has no reference whatever to fees.

Let the question be put to any unprejudiced and sensible person—Was the College to receive a signed paper from a candidate for a diploma, certifying that he had gone through all the branches of education, from men who were as yesterday only pupils, who had neither age nor opportunities to entitle them to become teachers, who had not gone through the necessary steps of being assistants, of being dissectors or demonstrators, who had not, in the slightest degree, signalized themselves in the pursuit of the science? Was it to be endured that such men should at once

start forward and claim the privilege of being the *heads of schools*, without any intermediate steps? Were they to be considered as lecturers on the great and extensive subjects of pathology and surgery, and to have the power of granting certificates and recommendations which should have equal weight with those given by the most experienced and the most eminent men in the profession—men who had, after a succession of years, and after having gone through all the subordinate duties, become lecturers? Is the College to have no power whatever in regulating the education of candidates for diplomas? Is the certificate to certify any thing? Is there to be no check? Is the College to receive, as an important document, a testimony in favour of a pupil's qualifications from a man who was himself only a student last year, and merely because he has this year received a diploma?

Has not every institution, every university, regulations compelling men to go through a certain course of education, before they can be admitted to an examination? It has been most erroneously, and, I believe, wilfully, asserted by Dr. Armstrong, that the College will prevent private teachers. Now, this is not the case. The College desires no such power to be placed in their hands: they do not prevent any one from imparting the knowledge he possesses to pupils, nor will it interfere with the manner it is done.

The members only reserve to themselves the power of being the judges whether the certificate of attendance on certain lectures shall be considered sufficient testimony of a pupil having gone through a proper course of study. It may, perhaps, be stated, in reply to this, that it is absurd to talk of a man not being prevented from teaching, if his certificates will not be received by the College. But are there not, at every University, private teachers, who have not even the prospect of their certificates being ever recognized? Are there not even men in London whose certificates are not considered sufficient testimonies, although they have already acquired fame by teaching anatomy? Does the College acknowledge the certificate of a demonstrator, even although he may have been many years an assiduous teacher?

I believe that the College would be rather pleased with a pupil who would bring testimonies of having attended the private lectures of a demonstrator or a teacher whom they had not yet recognized; but the pupil would at the same time be told, that, although it was highly creditable in him to take every advantage that offered, still those certificates were not sufficient.

It is quite ridiculous for any man to say, that, because his certificates are not acknowledged, he cannot teach. He can teach if he chooses, but it may, perhaps, be said, "so few pupils

will come to him, that he will make no money by it."

Now I ask, how a demonstrator is paid for his trouble as a teacher? Does he not even pay a fee to become a demonstrator? and does he not do all the laborious duties without receiving any emolument? He looks only to the prospect, that, if he works modestly and diligently in this department, (and it is acknowledged to be a distinct art from the common practice of surgery,) he will gain a character which will, at length, entitle him, in his mature years, to become the head of a school. But these gentlemen, who complain of being so aggrieved, would, while they had the opportunity of making a character for themselves by teaching, be receiving the fees of all the pupils whom their talents attracted, and in this respect, at least, they would have advantages over the demonstrators.

But it would appear that nothing will satisfy these gentlemen, except the being at once acknowledged as the heads of schools, fully competent to perform all the duties of the principal lecturer; they will not submit to go through the subordinate offices.

They who have not considered this question further than it is stated by Dr. Armstrong will, perhaps, say that it is only a few gentlemen who can acquire the opportunity of gaining notoriety, or of becoming assistants in the

established schools. But had Dr. Armstrong been honest in his attack, would he have so industriously concealed the provision which the College has made for individuals unconnected with schools coming forward? Has this champion of the would-be lecturers made any mention of the prize-essays that have been founded expressly for this purpose, or have we heard of any of the individuals who complain of being aggrieved endeavouring to signalise themselves or to prove themselves worthy of the support of the profession by contesting for them, if they do not choose to go through the subordinate duties of teaching?

From what I know of the conduct of the College, I think I may venture to assert, that if any man, qualified by age and education, shall enter into competition on any of the subjects offered annually by the College of Surgeons as an excitement to the members of the profession to attend to the higher branches of the science; if he should show himself eminent as an anatomist, or as a reasoner on the facts of anatomy, or acquainted with practice, the College will not refuse their sanction to his being a lecturer, entitled to the privileges of the established schools.

The only true ground of complaint which the gentlemen have, whose cause Dr. Armstrong has taken up, is, that the College has already

admitted the certificates of men who are no better than themselves. But this a piece of injustice on the part of the College which the demonstrators are more entitled to complain of, for their certificates are not admitted, while those of men who are much their juniors in the profession, and who, if any judgement can be formed from report, are inferior to them in talent, are received.

Why do not these gentlemen who consider themselves aggrieved, if they have such superior talents for teaching, set themselves fairly to the labour, and show themselves to be really clever men, instead of employing a radical and quacking doctor to puff them off? If they prove themselves worthy, they may be assured that the College will grant them all the advantages they can desire. But unless they do so, their lectures will never be sanctioned as being sufficient, for the College is conscious that it has already done much to hurt the respectability of the profession by having granted all the privileges which the seniors in the profession possess to young men who have got a few of the inferior class of students to come to them by holding out the inducement of small fees and the promise of *grinding*, or, as the new term says, giving them catachetical examinations to fit them for passing the College. It was high time that a stop should be put to this.

It is said that the only test of a pupil having been properly educated is the examination which he passes, but this is not true; it holds in no profession. A man with a good memory and a little assurance may, in the course of a few months, be so instructed as to be able to pass a very severe examination. I lately knew a curious instance of this:—A young man, who had never been taught Latin, learned the English of every word of the preface to the London Pharmacopoeia so accurately that when he was examined by the Apothecaries, he was considered sufficiently grounded in that branch of education.

I beg to assure the gentlemen who are Examiners, that I do not offer this as an imputation on the manner they perform their office, for I know it is done so effectually, that I give this as an instance, that a man may pass what is considered a competent examination without his having any education, or any knowledge of a subject, except what a grinder might furnish him with in a month. The members of the College, being well aware of the truth of this, have very justly considered the circumstance of a man having had full opportunities of learning his profession, as one of the best proofs that he will become a useful member of it; and therefore I venture the assertion, that the College will best perform its duty to the public by endeavouring

to take care that the students of anatomy and surgery shall attend, at least, one lecturer, whom they know to be fully competent to the task he has undertaken.

Dr. Armstrong talks much of the monopolizing spirit of the College in their selection of lecturers ; but he almost immediately afterwards affords an example how a man trips when he is too eager after a selfish purpose, especially if his progress be oblique.

After praising the government and schools of Paris, and after contrasting them with those of London, he lets drop, like a driveller, the fact, that there are *no private schools* permitted there ; that it is the POLICE which regulates the teaching of anatomy ; that there are only *two* public schools. Now, what is the state of teaching in London ? The College receives the certificates of ELEVEN INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS, or, at least, ten ; for I am not certain whether Mr. Taunton, son of the late lecturer of that name, now lectures.

This champion has had the unparalleled assurance to assert, that the teachers in the old schools of anatomy are incapable, that they are elected by interest. Does he not, in this outrageous attack, conceal not only the history of the rise, but the names of Cline, Cooper, Abernethy, and Bell, the heads of the schools he has had the presumption to impugn ? Is he so little admitted into the society of the higher classes in the me-

dical profession, as not to know the way in which these men have become eminent? Does he not know that they have attained their station by a life-time spent in the pursuit of anatomy, and that they have gone through all the regular steps before they became the heads of schools?

Although he flings his envenomed shafts around him, has he ventured to mention the names of the juniors in these schools, Green, Shaw, or Stanley? Does he not know, that each of these gentlemen has not only gone through the laborious duties of dissectors, assistants, and demonstrators for many years, receiving no emolument whatever, but giving up their labour in the hope, that if they made a character for themselves, they would be admitted to the honourable station of teachers, whose certificates would be received by the College? Have not these gentlemen proved themselves worthy of that honour, and are they not known as scientific anatomists? Have they not published works, which are esteemed highly both at home and abroad? He must, or ought to know, that there are many younger men pursuing their steps.

Is it to be supposed that any of those gentlemen would so far forget the dignity of their profession as to endeavour to attract notice by allowing a turbulent doctor to hold them up as martyrs to oppression, or permit themselves to be puffed off as Dr. Armstrong has spoken of

one of his *protégés*, whom the profession have now, for the first time, heard of? Let us hear what he says of one of these gentlemen, who pretends that he is not permitted to make use of his extraordinary talents:—"The exclusion of this gentleman is a great public loss; he is not only admirably adapted for a teacher of anatomy, but his mind being stored with all that is valuable in modern pathology, his lectures on surgery would have been highly desirable, as he could have *associated* them with the principles of physic, too little understood by some long-established lecturers on the former subjects."

In comparing the men whose cause he espouses, with the lecturers in the established schools, Dr. Armstrong has certainly conferred a great benefit on the members of the profession who intend to educate their sons as surgeons, for he has necessarily called for an examination of their claims. Whether he has proved a useful friend to his *protégés* will now be determined.

He sets out with affirming, as a proof of the merit of some of the new lecturers, that they have collected together a number of pupils; and this he insidiously offers as a proof of their being superior to the teachers in the established schools.

But, I ask, can he give a single instance of one of these lecturers having fairly competed with the old schools? Have they attracted

pupils by signalizing themselves in the pursuit of anatomy or surgery? Has *any one of them* done any thing to promote these sciences, or do they even appear ambitious of attaining the character of anatomists?

I hope some of these gentlemen will rise from the station in which they have voluntarily put themselves; but it will require some grand discovery or great improvement in the art, or that respectability of character, which only length of years spent in fair and assiduous teaching can confer.

There is one gentleman, Mr. Brooks, whom I am sorry to enumerate in this class, who, by long dedicating himself to the severe duty of teaching anatomy, and of forming a museum, has won the sympathy and a share of the support of the profession.

Dr. Armstrong has most carefully concealed the true cause of the apparent success of some of those gentlemen. When he was writing, he knew that the main attraction was in the inferior fee; he did not venture, when extolling their talents as superior to those of the established lecturers, to state that, while the established teachers delivered only two courses of lectures for nine guineas, these new gentlemen would give six courses of lectures and six courses of dissection for one guinea more.

That the privileges and advantages which the

student had for twenty guineas, in the old school, were *offered* by the new schools for ten guineas. It was even held out that, for the expense of one year's residence in London, students might be turned into the College, while, by the old process, a residence of two years was required ; so that, on the fairest computation of a student's expenses, they performed for £150 what required £300 in the regular course of education.

It signified not if hurry, and confusion, and incompetency resulted ; the student, nevertheless, was, by *grinding*, fitted for his diploma. The College has, however, wisely put a stop to the system of completing the course of education in twelve months : the students must now pass two seasons in London.

But it was not only by inferior fees that they tempted students to come to them, for they were mean enough to enter into a compact with the resurrection-men to stop bodies carried to the regular schools.

Is not the difference in the fee alone sufficient temptation to many young men? Could not this doctor, if he chose, point out instances of pupils coming up to town, provided with money to pay the regular fees, seduced by seeing that there was what he would call a cheap shop, enter himself as a student there, and put the difference in his pocket? A raw youth from the country is very liable to be led to suppose that

what are called cheap shops are really so : but does not every man who understands the world know that they are, in fact, dearer than the respectable ones, and, though he may pay a less sum, he is buying at a dearer rate, since he is paying for a very inferior article? Since this doctor has chosen to compare the state of the schools with the state of trade, I hope to be excused for replying to him in his own coarse way.

To follow up his style of argument, let us compare the cheap schools with the established ones, as he would compare two shops. Is there not, in each of the established schools, a valuable museum of natural and morbid anatomy to which the students are admitted? Are there not generally two principal lecturers, a demonstrator, and two dissectors or assistants, whose duty is to assist the students? Is there, on the other hand, any museum in these cheap schools? Does not the same individual combine the office of lecturer, demonstrator, assistant, dissector, injector of the bodies, and even, frequently, the office of porter, or cleaner of the tables? This may be all very meritorious for one individual to perform; but are the advantages to the student the same in both schools, or will a father be satisfied with his son's notion of economy, who, to save ten guineas of the two or three hundred his education will cost him,

becomes a pupil of one of these schools? Should the College, composed of men who, from their experience in the world, are sensible of the importance of the duty a teacher undertakes, permit the office of a lecturer on anatomy to be further degraded? It is lamentable to think in how much danger it is already of becoming so.

Do we not see by the advertisements in the public papers, that some of those lecturers propose to give students bodies for dissection at half price! Now such an assertion, to all who know any thing of the mode of procuring bodies, must appear either as a gross deception, or as a proof that these persons also take upon themselves the trade of resurrection-men.

Is not such an advertisement a degradation, for who are the individuals that can, at present, procure bodies at a cheaper rate than other lecturers? They must be men who would rather glory in being brought up to a police-office—men who have no respectable relations to feel for them, and who can have no patients to terrify or disgust.

In fact, it comes to this, if the College is not supported by the respectable members of the profession, the duty of teaching their sons (for the greater proportion of students are the sons of medical men) will devolve on men who have no characters to sustain.

The eminent characters in the profession* will not undertake it, and the teachers of anatomy will be brought to a level with the men who are now porters in the dissecting-rooms.

It is scarcely possible to imagine that any man, who pretends to the respectable character of a physician, should express himself as Dr. Armstrong has : in his letter he tells the members that they “ must resolve the utter incompetency of the Court of Examiners and Council, as now constituted.”

Can it be believed that the men whom this

* It is, perhaps, not generally known that there is in London a society composed of gentlemen who are teachers, or have been teachers, of anatomy. This society was instituted by Mr. John Hunter, for the purpose of facilitating the study of anatomy, and meets three times every year for this purpose. It has had to boast of the names of

Dr. Baillie.	Mr. Wilson.
Mr. Cline.	Mr. Bell.
Sir William Blizard.	Professor Coleman.
Sir E. Home.	Mr. Thomas.
Sir David Dundas.	Mr. Lawrence.
Sir Christopher Pegge,	Mr. Brodie.
Professor in Oxford.	Mr. Headington.
Mr. Abernethy.	Mr. Green.
Sir Astley Cooper.	Mr. Shaw.
Professor Kidd, of Oxford.	Mr. Stanley.

The profession will best judge whether the gentlemen whose names are in this list would concert or join in any illiberal proceeding.

doctor would declare incompetent are Cline, Abernethy, Blizzard, Home, Cooper, Lynn, Norris, Dundas, Carlisle? Among the junior members, not yet of the Court of Examiners, are there not Keate, Vincent, Thomas, Guthrie? Has the College not, as professors, Charles Bell and Green, and formerly Wilson, Chevalier, Lawrence, and Brodie? Where will this doctor find names in whom the profession will place confidence, if not in those at present at the head of the College? Would they confide in his friends Bennett and Kiernan, or in Messrs. Brooks, Carpue, Grainger, Dermott, and Sleight?

Dr. Armstrong has already, from the style of his lectures, as published in the *Lancet*, acquired for himself the name of a Medical Hunt; but in his revolutionary enthusiasm, he seems to outdo the universal suffrage and annual parliament-men.

Dr. Armstrong cannot be ignorant that the College of Surgeons have attempted to raise the respectability of the profession, and that in this attempt they have sacrificed emolument to what to them appeared their duty. He must have known that they had it in their power to pass all licentiates for midwifery as well as to receive all fees for licenses for the extensive class of men who practise pharmacy; and that in the desire of leading a few to accomplish

themselves in surgery more highly, they became willing to limit their attention to their own branch of the healing art, and to dismiss the care of the other departments to the physicians and apothecaries, thus giving up a large portion of the gains they might have made.

But, notwithstanding this, Dr. Armstrong, with a freedom and a coarseness very ill becoming a member of the body he belongs to, accuses them of mercenary motives. He should not, when entering on such an inquiry, have been ignorant that the money they receive is not appropriated, and that new projects for the advancement of surgery are in contemplation. But in his zeal for the class of men he has associated himself with, he has concealed, or he has overlooked, the merits of the College of Surgeons; for merit they, undoubtedly, have in the estimation of all men: the question is only to the degree; but to give them no merit at all, betrays some wrong motive. It is not, however, surprising in the associate and supporter of the periodical paper we have had occasion to allude to, the sole object of which is, like one of the worst political libelers, to vilify every man who has attained eminence. The College of Surgeons, in assuming that name, have done much to raise themselves to the condition of a liberal and scientific body. They have received into their keeping the museum of Mr. Hunter, which was rejected by others.

They have laboured successfully to improve it; they have kept two gentlemen, and many assistants, to dissect, and investigate, and improve both human and comparative anatomy; they have appointed salaried professors to teach; they have proposed essays and given medals; they have formed a library; in short, they have shown themselves desirous, by all the means in their power, of sustaining the profession on high grounds; and, as a liberal and scientific body, and not as a mere corporation.* If this doctor had acknowledged these things, and then had suggested further improvement, he might have done service; at all events, he would have escaped blame; he might have been supposed to have intended well, but, as he has chosen to proceed, he has exposed his motives and degraded himself.

* Every foreigner, whose object is science, visits the College of Surgeons, and, during the lectures delivered there, the theatre is crowded almost to suffocation.

THE END.

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